



AAUW-Orange, Durham, Chatham Branch

From the President: Mary Monroe Kolek, Ph.D.

#MeToo: Harnessing the Energy of a Movement

If you are a member of AAUW then I imagine you: 1) were not surprised with the latest revelations about a male executive's treatment of women in the workplace (the fact you have to wonder which one I am referring to says it all) and 2) are already committed to "advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research" (if that sounds familiar it should-it is the mission of AAUW). Saying you are familiar with the extent and range of inequities and humiliations- not to mention crimes- women experience in their personal and professional lives has taken on new meaning over the past month when, in response to the Weinstein scandal, Alyssa Milano added a # to Tarana Burke's

"Me Too-a grassroots empowerment through empathy movement" and it went viral. Media accounts note there have been over ½ million tweets of this rallying cry and it continues to reverberate across social media and community gathering sites. As noted in internet postings and a recent article in Atlantic Magazine by Sophie Gilbert, the unified voices of women across generations and geographical locations declaring, "Me Too" carry with them the "power to transform a phenomena into a movement." Movement by definition requires action. And so, in response to the recognition that the #MeToo movement has had a positive impact on the prevailing reality that "most women defined their own sexual harassment and assault... as something unspoken, something private, something to be ashamed of acknowledg-

ing" a question that bears asking is: *How can we harness the energy emanating from the realization of our shared experiences to affect meaningful and lasting change.* A follow up to that is, once we are sensitized to the extent and effects of this problem *must* we do something and, if yes, *whose responsibility is it.* Gilbert tackles the criticism that merely posting a slogan or wearing a button is at best, "passive activism", noting that this first step — developing a shared understanding of the magnitude of the problem (and I would add its cost from a human and resource based perspective) — is critical to tackling the next step — transforming what is now defined as a women's movement into a unifying, activating cultural movement (unsourced). Women *and* men must speak up. We must engage in meaningful dialogue and

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Special points of interest:

- November Program
- Know Your Rights
- Welcome New Members
- October Minutes
- Public Policy
- Treasurer's Report

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ALEC's Model Legislation: Inception, Implementation and Intrigue

Jacob Forrest Harrison Smith, PhD (2018) Political Science, UNC-CH.

November 18, 2017 Chapel Hill Library, Room B, 10:30 a.m.

Financial Report October 21, 2017

Memorial Donation

A donation to the AAUW General Fund has been made in memory of Kay Irish. Kay had been a member since 2012, was an enthusiastic member of the Good Morning Book Club, and had lived in Ferrington Village. We will miss her.

Balances:

Checking	\$1548.51
MM Savings	\$1,004.72
CD	\$4,887.37

Karen Piplani,
Treasurer

Have you ever heard of **ALEC**? Until two years ago, neither had many of us--and yet its influence is felt throughout our nation.

The **American Legislative Exchange Council** describes itself as "America's largest non-partisan, voluntary membership organization of state legislators and private sector representatives dedicated to the principles of limited government, free markets and federalism. [It is] comprised of nearly one-quarter of the country's state legislators and stakeholders." ALEC describes itself as "nonpartisan" and "voluntary." It has been noted by some that the

price of membership is steep and most members are aligned with one party.

This large, conservative group of state legislators and private sector representatives draft and share model state-level legislation for distribution among state governments in the United States. Model bills include a range of issues, such as reducing regulation and individual and corporate taxation, combating illegal immigration, loosening environmental regulations, tightening voter identification rules, weakening labor unions, and opposing gun control. And all of this is done (by design) without a deep understanding by the

public of their platforms and presence. ALEC is however getting more and broader attention due to the pervasiveness of its influence across a number of governmental and societal institutions.

Please come to the **Chapel Hill Public Library, November 18 at 10:30 a.m.** to learn about ALEC. It is already at work in our state. Presenter Jacob Smith will discuss the influence of this powerful group.

— Bea Keller

Welcome New Members

Erin Handley: Welcome to AAUW. Erin has a B.S. in Neuroscience from Cedar Crest College. Some of us know Erin because she is a YMCA regular. She is a Jane Austen devotee and has volunteered for a Jane Austen library in England. My first discussion with Erin had to do with the advantages of rats over

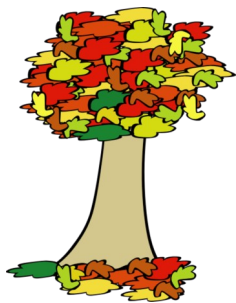
mice, from her labwork. Quite an interesting person. Also she volunteers as a Friend of the Library at the Chapel Hill Public Library. Is possibly interested in a book club.

Annette Jurgelski Welcome back Annette!!!! Annette is known to all of us and we are so glad to have her back in the flock. Over

the years, she was participating in the book club.

If you have someone you think may be interested in AAUW, please contact one of the Membership Committee which includes Michele Hoyman, Jan Holland, Randy Rosser, Laurie Tepper.

— Michele Hoyman



President's message (continued)

with a unified voice say, “no more”. We must make it clear through actions that that we will identify, censure, and if laws are broken, prosecute those who practice, promote, and — I can't believe I am writing this part — brag about harassment and assault; be it in locker rooms, on buses, in boardrooms or in chatrooms. We each play a role in keeping the momentum going and shifting the paradigm to better reflect the model of society promoted for over 100 years by AAUW: One where equity and respect are not just platitudes but standards by which we set our course and assess our own actions as well as those of our leaders and our institutions.

If you want to learn more about equity- or specifically sexual harassment - the national AAUW website is an excellent resource. The sidebar that accompanies this article gives you a glimpse of what is on that site- which includes information about support for legal action. It also contains a link to the specific page on the site. It is encouraging that society actually may, in these trying times, be primed to act in accord with the standards AAUW embraces. We should be ready to seize the moment created by # MeToo and insist that our representatives, schools, universities, organizations and businesses promote and enforce policies and cultures that are safe, equitable and ethical. So what can you do? Con-

tinue your advocacy through spoken and written words; share the work of AAUW with those who do not yet know of the organization; and assertively and persistently support those whose voices and actions speak of their commitment to respect and equity (let organizations know why you are sending contributions or withdrawing them; why you are purchasing their goods or not.) Be proud that you are already part of the movement and that you are modeling your stance for others.

If you are interested in telling your story please consider submitting it for our newsletter or share it during our monthly meeting time. We are all in this together!

make a donation in her honor to the AAUW.org scholarship fund.

— Bea Keller

In Memoriam: Kay Irish

We are sad to announce the death of Kay (Kathleen R.) Irish who died September 20th at her home in Ferrington Village surrounded by her three children, Denise, Mary and Clark, and beloved silky terrier, Rascal. Kay was a voracious reader and a member of our book club. She also enjoyed gardening and cooking and was known

for her wonderful sense of humor. In her professional life, Kay was an advertising executive at Gannett Corporation and later launched a new career in real estate which spanned over a decade. Kay was predeceased by her husband, Tom Irish. Kay's funeral was held September 30 in White Plains, NY. As is our branch's tradition, AAUW will

AAUW Helps You to Know Your Rights: Workplace Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). Very generally, “sexual harassment” describes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Title VII is a federal law that prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion, and it applies to employers with 15 or more employees, including federal, state, and local governments. Even with Title VII's protections, many people across the country still face sexual harassment in their workplaces. This page offers basic information about sexual harassment and guidelines for next steps if you believe you may be experiencing sexual harassment at work.

<https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/legal-resources/know-your-rights-at-work/workplace-sexual-harassment/>



Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship Fund Donations Your Support Is an Investment in the Future Contributions Due Soon



Carrie Schwenning was a beloved member of the early Chapel Hill Branch of AAUW, who died very suddenly. In her memory, an endowment fund was established to create a scholarship in her name at UNC-Chapel Hill. Originally, the scholarship was a loan of \$100.00 which required repayment. The amount increased over the years and became a true scholarship instead of a loan. Each year, our branch collects members' donations to supplement the endowment amount, in order to support a \$1,500.00 scholarship for a UNC woman student.

Here is a copy of the letter we received from our 2014-2016 Schwenning Scholarship winner, a clear endorsement of the impact of this scholarship.

"December 2, 2013

I was honored to learn that I was a recipient of the Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship, a generous gift that allows me to focus on what is important to me, my public health education. I am writing to thank you for your generous, financial support towards my studies at UNC.

My studies at the Gillings School of Global Public Health focus on public health leadership. After working in demen-

tia related research, I moved to Lilongwe, Malawi in southern Africa where I volunteered for two years at Baylor College of Medicine's pediatric clinic for children infected with HIV. The complexities of health issues that place so many people at particular vulnerability to disease and illness inspired me to return to Chapel Hill to pursue higher education in the field of public health so that I can do more to address health disparities. Health disparities among women are of particular interest. While studying at Carolina, I have been engaged in the local health concerns and currently enjoy the privilege of improving the health of African American women in North Carolina through a UNC faculty research project. I value the emphasis on global and local service championed at Carolina. The Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship is a gracious and wonderful gift. I assure you that I will continue the same spirit of caring and service in which it was bestowed. Because of your support, I am a step closer to addressing population health concern as an expert in my field. Thank you ever so much.

*Sincerely,
Hillary Owino*

We are currently collecting donations from our members

for the 2018-2019 Scholarship year. Please give as generously as you can, and remember that in addition to being tax-deductible, your donation is eligible for corporate matching funds from those who work or are retired from many large corporations.

Please make your check out to: **UNC-Chapel Hill** and put Scholarship **Fund # 656725** in the Memo line on the check.

Please give or mail your check to our Treasurer, Karen Pipani, 1502 Halifax Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

Public Policy Items : Bea Keller

Senate Bill 656 and proposed Senate Bill 698:

Senate Bill 656 eliminates all judicial primaries in 2018 which “would force voters to pick from perhaps dozens of candidates with ‘winners’ who could garner merely 20 percent of the vote.” (Marcia Morey, former Chief District Court Judge, Durham County, and member of NC House of Representatives) The bill was vetoed by Gov. Cooper but the veto was overridden by the General Assembly. Senate Bill 698, called “Increase Voter Accountability of Judges,” wipes out all NC judges’ terms as of the Dec. 31, 2018. Our NC constitution mandates terms of four to eight years but this bill would force all judges to run again for terms of merely two years. Bear in mind that no other state in the union has two-year terms for judges. Such short terms would force judges to constantly campaign and take time away from hearing cases and deciding appeals. Senate Bill 698 would require a constitutional amendment. Anger with recent court decisions declaring many of the

laws unconstitutional is at the core of General Assembly leaders’ efforts to try to take over the courts. What has transpired regarding our judicial elections to date? Think partisan labels on judicial election ballots and gerrymandered judicial voting maps! We rely on our courts to dispense fair and impartial justice but the General Assembly is trying to tilt the scales of justice to favor the ideology of its leaders. Former state Supreme Court justice Robert Orr, a Republican, said this latest initiative is a “continued effort to try and intimidate the judiciary.”

US Plans Departure from UNESCO Dec. 31, 2018

In a move that garnered very little space and time in the US news media, the US announced its eventual pull-out from UNESCO, the UN’s educational, scientific and cultural agency. Trump alleged anti-Israel bias on the part of the organization. UNESCO works to improve education for girls, protect cultural sites and traditions through the World Heritage program, promote understanding of the Holocaust’s horrors, and to defend media freedom among other mis-

sions. The Reagan administration pulled out of UNESCO in 1984 citing mismanagement, corruption and advancing Soviet interests. The US rejoined in 2003 but stopped paying its dues in 2011 as a protest when UNESCO voted to include Palestine. The US owes about \$550 million in back payments. At issue in the current departure was the naming of two World Heritage sites as Palestinian: Hebron’s Old City (located in the southern West Bank) and the Tomb of the Patriarchs, located in the Hebron hills nearby. The cave and adjoining field, according to tradition, was purchased by Abraham as a burial plot, and has been associated with the Holy Books: [Torah](#), [Bible](#) and [Quran](#). Hebron has approximately a population of 215,000 Palestinians, and 500-850 Jewish settlers located near the old city. The area around the old city is still under Israeli protection and rule. Both sites are significant to Jewish (The Tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs), Christian (Old Testament biblical references), and Muslim faiths (with its association to Abraham, considered a Quranic prophet and patriarch through Ishmael). Israel questioned whether the sites are endangered and



hoped that its insistence on secret ballots for the Heritage Site vote would go in its favor. After the U.S. pulled out, Israel also cut its ties with the organization. Audrey Azoulay, born in Paris to a Moroccan Jewish family, was elected director of the organization over the Qatari candidate the day after the U.S. pulled out of UNESCO.





AAUW Orange, Durham Chatham Chapter Minutes of October 21, 2017 Plenary Meeting

At 11 a.m., Mary Kolek brought the meeting to order. She introduced guests, new members and thanked Wallis Cooper, Ruth Freed and Sandy Smalley for bringing the refreshments and contributing to the warmth and fellowship of the meeting.

President Kolek said that AAUW is at the forefront of standing up for women and asked, in the spirit of the “Me Too” campaign, that we become activists in our daily lives, even in small ways, to point out inequities and injustices. Recording secretary Margaret Herring continues her lifelong activism and for that reason, could not attend today’s meeting. Wallis Cooper pointed out that women were underrepresented among the UNC-CH trustees and men and bankers were overrepresented. She asked, “Shouldn’t we do something about it?” and if AAUW-NC could be informed of our concern for this inequity. Mary Kolek referred the matter to Bea Keller, Public Policy Chair. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

President Kolek also said that the Membership Directory is out and asked that members pick up a copy.

She thanked Kay White for her dedication to this project and to all who contributed to ensuring membership and program information is up to date.

Treasurer Karen Piplani said that the Schwenning Scholarship money will be collected in November. She gave a brief overview of the history of the scholarship and asked members to continue their support. Program Vice-President Donna Wilson said that one of our AAUW Fellowship recipients speaking at our February meeting was also a recipient of the Schwenning Scholarship. Mary Kolek also pointed out that Donna Wilson served on the national AAUW College/University Committee.

Dr. Jenna Robinson spoke on “The Truth About Student Loans.” She said her organization, the James C. Martin Center for Academic Renewal worked for more transparency in university boards, market based reforms which include increasing apprenticeships, cost effective solutions, and searching for products to make universities more able to deliver to their students. In 2014, 69% of students had loan debt--\$28,950 per student (she later went on to demonstrate how this is a

deceiving number that masks some critical issues relative to the challenges specific populations face.) Other alarming statistics include: The average debt at graduation rose at more than two times the rate of inflation and student loan defaults, which only measure students who are six month behind in their payments, are at a record high. Eight million have given up paying back their loan. U.S. student debt (1.3 trillion dollars) has surpassed credit card debt. Women are in more debt than men and take longer to pay back the debt (not surprising given the pay differential that exists). In 2012, senior citizens held 36 billion in student loan debt. More than half of all borrowers have defaulted or paid nothing after 5 years. Dr. Robinson went on to provide deeper analysis and explanation of the data.

After probing factors that contribute to the growing problem of student debt Dr. Robinson’s informed suggestions were: limit your debt—as an example, a first year student shouldn’t borrow more than \$5,500 a year with no more than \$3,500 in subsidized loans. Students should try to get federal loans and not private loans which charge much more interest—



AAUW Orange, Durham Chatham Chapter Minutes of October 21, 2017 Plenary Meeting

sometimes as much as 14.24%. The responsibility colleges and universities bear for ensuring students understand the pros and cons of loans and their impact was discussed. Of 100 colleges where graduates borrow most in private loans, 85% are non-profit 4 year colleges. Colleges whose graduates had the highest rate of debt had the lowest standards for student selection which resulted in their admitting students who were not prepared for university challenges; thus resulting in low graduation rates. Students who failed to graduate could not pay back their loans. For graduate students, Graduate Plus loans exist. Unfortunately, there are no limits on Graduate Plus loans. Default loan statistics are only taken on the defaults in the first 3 years, not after. This impacts the ability of people and organizations to assess a university's or college's real record.

Policy solutions included: end open ended Plus Loans for graduate students, make Pell Grants available year round so that those students receiving them could attend summer

school, consolidate all loans into one program, make private loans subject to bankruptcy protections, begin using repayment data instead of default data to judge which schools are eligible to offer loans, and improve the level and amount of counseling to students and parents when applying for a loan. An example of a young woman who went to a private university for 4 years, and graduated with a sociology degree with \$250,000 debt was used as an example of pitfalls in choices. One of the members of the audience offered an example she was familiar with and advised young graduate students: be sure you have savings and/or an income going into the situation of having to pay for university, choose what you can afford –ex. public over private, live at home if possible, and make frugal lifestyle decisions. Caveat emptor!

Donna Wilson announced our November 18 meeting (see article on ALEC included in this newsletter). In response to an audience question, Mary Kolek gave a short explanation of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a conserva-

tive organization that develops and promotes model legislation and which is having a great impact in the U.S.

Mary offered the condolences of the membership to the family and friends of Kay Irish. A respected and revered friend who was remembered in her obituary as smart, funny and loving.

Mary indicated that a new iteration of the book club seemed to be in order and suggested that if all or some members wanted to select a book on occasion and do a group read we could have an ad hoc meeting and over coffee, tea and other refreshments enjoy lively conversation. Suggestions are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10.

Respectfully submitted by
Bea Keller



Website News

Remember if you have questions about our next meeting or need to check on the book club's selection, please check our web page: <http://chapelhill-nc.aauw.net>. If you want to check our archive of past newsletters in our "members only" section, remember the password is the word "dogwood" in lower case letters.